



## Rhode Island Hospital

*A Lifespan Partner*

October 20, 2012

To Whom It May Concern:

I am pleased to write this letter of recommendation for Julia Spencer as a speaker to your students. I was on a panel with her at the Warren Alpert Medical School of Brown University in September, 2012. The session was part of the scholarly concentration of one of the medical students, looking at ethics in genetic diseases. I presented the clinical information about retinitis pigmentosa along with the physician's role as a counselor and advocate. Julia presented the patient's point of view, navigating through the health care system with a progressive, untreatable disease. She explained her particular struggles and offered the students her insight on her perspective on the value of the doctor-patient relationship.

I was mesmerized by her presentation. She described her experiences in a way that made it easy for the audience to understand what it was like to be in her shoes – what the patient hears and what the patient feels about the care he or she receives. As a physician, I found it invaluable to listen to her recount her experiences with very intelligent but not very compassionate physicians, about the adjustments she and her husband had to make as her condition progressed, and about how advice and counseling from her physicians could have made these adjustments easier.

Julia is a wonderful and compelling speaker, and she does it with grace and humor, and with the intent of educating young physicians on the importance of treating the patient as much as treating the disease. I came away from the session with a deeper understanding of how it is to be a patient, and I know that the medical students will always remember the lessons learned from Julia. She wrote a wonderful book about her experiences entitled "Looking Through a Keyhole", but it is even more fascinating hearing it directly from the source.

I cannot recommend highly enough the value of having Julia address your students. I think your students and your faculty will find there is much to learn from patients like Julia, and I doubt there is any patient more equipped to fill this role than she is.

Sincerely,

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